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## STUDENT REPORT

USAF AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS PLAN:  
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

MAJOR JOHN G. SWAIN III

84-2535

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  This paper presents a historical review on affirmative actions. Starting with the Civil Rights Act of 1866 through the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, it discusses the evolution of executive and legislative actions leading to current affirmative actions programs. It provides an in-depth review of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan development and implementation. The paper concludes with an overview of upcoming changes in the Affirmative Actions Plan.		

## PREFACE

During my 10 years as a Personnel officer, I have been concerned with the lack of involvement of unit commanders and supervisors in the Air Force's equal opportunity efforts and, in particular, the Affirmative Actions Plan. Perhaps this attitude persists because commanders and supervisors believe that equal opportunity is not a problem in today's Air Force. Unfortunately, it is this type of complacency which permits personal and systemic discrimination to flourish. Historically, Social Actions Programs have concentrated on personal discrimination and incidents of personal discrimination probably continue, but such attitudes and acts are far more subtle. On the other hand, systemic discrimination manifests itself in a number of ways. While each of the personnel programs independently does not appear discriminatory, yet when viewed in the context of the whole personnel envelope they can restrict the upward mobility of minorities and women.

The purpose of this research paper is to provide the "why" and "how" of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan. Hopefully, a thorough historical understanding of the plan will enlighten commanders and supervisors of past problems and prevent their recurrence. We must not assume that the problem has been solved; such attitudes precipitate a repeat of history--demonstrations, violence, and degradation of our mission.

In preparing my historical treatise, I would like to thank Lt Col Norman Lambert, Capt Dorothy Miles, and TSgt James Belt of the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. Their advice and documentary assistance enabled me to gather the facts and place those facts in proper perspective. A special thanks to Lt Col Fred Clark of the Air Command and Staff College for his editorial comments. His patience and diligence aided me in providing an unbiased opinion of the research paper's content and format.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Major Swain holds a B.S. in Sociology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and an M.A. in Sociology from the University of Virginia. His professional military education includes Squadron Officer School in residence and correspondence. Major Swain is also a graduate of the Professional Personnel Management Course of the USAF Leadership and Management Development Center.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

The military environment mirrors, for the most part, every other American institution. Consequently, many problems which beset American institutions also exist within the military. Although the profession of arms would like to believe that discrimination was minimal or nonexistent, some of our past military leaders have recognized the seriousness of the problem. As a case in point, General George Patton drove this issue home when he stated, "You show me a commander or leader who says he doesn't have race trouble and I'll show you a dumb son-of-a-bitch" (11:61). The past discrimination problem can be further amplified when one realizes that during two world wars the military establishment still segregated white and black personnel. This situation was unchanged until President Truman issued an executive order in 1948 abolishing racial segregation in all of the armed forces (2:44). Times have changed and much headway has been made in equal opportunity within the military; however, the Air Force has experienced first-hand manifestations that the problem didn't go away in the 1950's and 1960's.

During the period between 1968 and 1971, racial violence erupted both overseas and within the continental United States. Four Air Force bases experienced significant racial disturbances: Clark AB, Philippines (1968), Sheppard AFB, Texas (1969), Osan AB, Korea (1970), and Travis AFB, California (1971). As a result, a number of Air Force and Department of Defense visits occurred which highlighted inequities in the military justice system and encouraged a preventive goal-oriented systems approach to human relations and equal opportunity rather than a crisis management approach (25:47). It was at this point in time that the Air Force leadership became serious about resolving the problem. Of course, the Department of Defense was not content to let the Air Force work the problem alone. In fact, the Department of Defense provided guidance to all the military services.

Based on the recommendations of Mr. Curtis R. Smothers, who during the summer of 1972 had visited several military installations within the Pacific Command, the Secretary of Defense forwarded a memorandum to all the service secretaries. Within the memorandum, the Secretary of Defense stated that he was pleased with the direction in which the Department was going in the equal opportunity arena. He also solicited renewed and vigorous support in accelerating the institutionalization of equal opportunity (20:1). It was in regard to this latter point that he provided Mr. Smothers' three recommendations:

1. That the Military Departments regulate the management of equal opportunity policies, plans, and programs by means of formal recognition and establishment of equal opportunity staff positions in unit organization manning documents, through continuing orientation programs, and appropriate instruction in Service schools.
2. That the Military Departments develop and publish in uniform format at all appropriate echelons of command, comprehensive equal opportunity affirmative actions plans, for minorities and servicewomen, which identify, establish and fix specific program objectives and responsibilities to include management information and accountability systems.
3. That the Military Departments formally regulate the development and appropriate distribution of command lessons learned in managing equal opportunity and race relations policies, plans, and programs (19:10).

It would be incorrect to assume that the Secretary of Defense's memorandum was the first step in the formation of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan. Numerous public laws and executive orders had already set the stage for the creation of affirmative actions. In the subsequent chapter, I will address in-depth these legislative and executive actions. However, it does appear that the racial disturbances of the late 1960's and early 1970's provided the needed impetus for action within the Department of Defense and, in particular, the Air Force. It was evident to the military leadership that if positive steps were not taken then racial turmoil would probably resurface even on a larger scale. In essence, history would repeat itself.

A thorough understanding of past events has always been the foundation for progress. As an active participant in the administration of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan, it appears to me that commanders and supervisors do not fully understand the basis for affirmative actions nor are they knowledgeable concerning the methodology used throughout the plan. The purpose of this research report is to provide a historical perspective of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan. This historical perspective is not intended to provide an empirical assessment of the plan's objectives. The Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center publishes annual assessments of this nature. It is my intent to provide a foundation of understanding upon which present and future commanders and supervisors can capitalize on in improving equal opportunity for minorities.

Chapter one presents a brief historical overview of the military's problems and solutions regarding equal opportunity. Chapter two focuses on the evolution of affirmative actions based on legislative and executive actions. Chapter three discusses the Air Force's development and implementation of its Affirmative Actions Plan. Chapter four provides some insight into where we have been and where we are going to include some upcoming changes in the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan.

## Chapter Two

### EVOLUTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS

Even though the first implication of equal opportunity can be traced back to the Declaration of Independence which states that all men are created equal and as such have the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it was not until 1866, with the passage of the first Civil Rights Act, that the first concerted official action was taken at the national level to grant any semblance of equality (14:1). The act provided that

all citizens of the United States shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States to make and enforce contracts, to own and convey property, and to due process and equal protection under the laws as is enjoyed by white citizens (13:1217).

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1866 provided the ground work for equality, it was largely ignored by the American citizenry. In fact, during the Woodrow Wilson administration, racial discrimination was openly encouraged. President Wilson himself argued that the segregation of the colored employees in government was begun with the idea to reduce friction between the two groups and in all fairness was in their best interest (5:54). This attitude prevailed until the 1940's when a number of political issues came into play.

In 1941, political pressure for racial reform promulgated in the issuance of Executive Order 8802 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The driving forces behind this new executive order were the philosophical impact of the New Deal and the inevitable involvement of the United States in the European war. With respect to the latter, it was viewed as paramount to promote racial harmony and unity in the face of a racist foe and to expand war production through the utilization of any and all manpower (5:60). Basically, this order reaffirmed the policy that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin. In addition, the order created the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) which was charged to

receive and investigate complaints of discrimination in violation of the provisions of this order and to take appropriate steps to redress grievances which it finds to be valid and to recommend to departments and agencies of the government of the United States measures which may be deemed

necessary or proper to effectuate the provisions of this order (1:7).

It appears that the FEPC made little progress in resolving the discrimination and segregation problems. Many government officials ignored the committee's charter, but, more importantly, the FEPC had no enforcement powers which made it for all intents and purposes ineffective. In addition, the FEPC found itself as complaint-oriented rather than initiating programs which would stem the tide of discrimination through equal employment opportunities; however, even as an arbitrator of complaints, the FEPC did a dismal job. Due to the lack of resources, it held only three hearings investigating discrimination complaints in the federal government (5:61-62).

Realizing the ineffectiveness of the FEPC and some basic fallacies in the original executive order, President Roosevelt issued a new, more pervasive executive order in May 1943. Executive order 9346 renewed the government's commitment to fair employment practices. Appropriate funding was provided thereby giving the FEPC the foundation to carry out its duties. This order also made some significant administrative changes to the FEPC. Unlike the previous order, this one took significant steps to avert discriminatory practices in the following ways: for the first time, all federal agencies were covered; all government contracts included a nondiscrimination clause; and all contractors, in turn, were required to include nondiscrimination clauses in their contracts (1:8). As mentioned earlier, the FEPC was revitalized but soon thereafter it returned to its ineffective ways. Between October 1941 and March 1946, the FEPC acted on 1,871 cases and found discrimination to exist in only 58 cases (22:32). This fact served to point "up the token nature of the federal FEPC and the critical problem of effective administrative implementation" (1:8). As World War II came to a close, President Truman took some revolutionary actions regarding discrimination.

In December 1946, he established a President's Committee on Civil Rights through the issuance of Executive Order 9808. This committee's charge was to conduct an in-depth study on civil rights and make recommendations to the President and Congress on how America could solve its long standing discriminatory problems. Within a year, the committee had prepared a comprehensive report which was submitted to Congress. The report faced severe opposition by the Southern dominated legislature and many of the proposals were rejected (1:9). Faced with an upcoming election, President Truman issued two executive orders which would have a significant impact on civil servants and military personnel. There has been much debate over the reasons for these executive orders; however, it would be best described as an attempt to win the black vote--a voting block which President Truman would need in order to defeat Dewey in the upcoming election.

In July 1948, President Truman issued Executive Orders 9980 and 9981. Order 9980 dealt with equality of treatment in civil service, and Order 9981 dealt with the equality issue in the Armed Forces (3:108).

Although it was initially unclear what President Truman intended in Executive Order 9811, he later clarified his order to mean integration within the Armed Services. A brief extract from that order will reveal the magnitude of this Presidential policy:

It is essential that there be maintained in the Armed Services of the United States the highest standards of democracy with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve...It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race...There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services...the committee is authorized...to examine into the rules, procedures, and practices of the Armed Services...to determine in what respect such rules, procedures, and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order (3:210).

So the stage was set for desegregation in the federal government and the Armed Services. The newest branch of the Armed Forces, the Air Force, began immediate steps to comply with the Presidential decree. By the early 1950's, the Air Force had desegregated and was content to believe that minorities had achieved equal opportunity.

It was during this time frame that a flurry of executive orders were issued. In February and December 1951, President Truman signed Executive Orders 10210 and 10308. These orders, for the most part, were insignificant in improving the equal opportunity dogma. Basically, they continued to provide for a nondiscrimination clause in contracts and established the Committee on Government Contract Compliance to monitor contract formulation (1:9). It was also during this period that equal opportunity was attacked by Congress. Considered as one of the darkest periods in Congressional history, one man waged war against the federal government and, in particular, equal opportunity--Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Senator McCarthy had a way of twisting and distorting facts to serve his purpose.

The fact that racial equality had always been an official doctrine of communist ideology in the United States and elsewhere was sometimes distorted to serve as demonstrative evidence that anyone, including blacks, who believed in racial equality was a communist or a communist sympathizer and was therefore disloyal to the Nation, not to its officially condoned policy of racism. It was revealed, for example, that scores of Negro and white government employees who had been active in combating discrimination were brought up on charges of disloyalty under President Truman's executive order on

employee loyalty (5:65).

Although Senator McCarthy's power began to wane by 1954, one of his committee members, Richard Nixon, became Vice President of the United States. The new administration's conservatism and lack of a black constituency did little to further equal opportunity at this time.

Even in his memoirs, President Eisenhower did not claim any credit for the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation (3:149). He did issue an executive order establishing the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy which was a reaffirmation of nondiscrimination in the federal government, but it also included the statement "that equal opportunity be afforded all qualified persons, consistent with law..." (23:409). This phrase meant that the government must take whatever action necessary to overcome societal inequities and to equalize the opportunity itself, not just the treatment of individuals. Many view this as the emergence of affirmative action; however, it would not be until the 1960's that the term actually appears in an executive order (6:148). Notwithstanding the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which its only claim to fame was the establishment of the Commission on Civil Rights, "the civil rights legislation during the Eisenhower years was not of a revolutionary nature and received little presidential backing" (3:149). As the 1960's drew close, the civil rights and equal opportunity movements reached the pinnacle of their political importance and became dominant national issues.

It was a sign of the times when President Kennedy declared that "I have dedicated my administration to the cause of equal opportunity in employment by the Government" (14:1). Although the basic concept of equal employment opportunity had been developed by previous administrations, Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925 which established the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (1:9). In addition, the text of the executive order included the term "affirmative action," and implied that contractors must actively pursue equal employment rather than settling simply for passive nondiscrimination (1:10). The following extract from the order states:

The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin (24:1977).

In order to give political clout and the appearance of immediate prestige to the newly established committee, the President appointed the Vice President as its chairman. As previously stated, the committee stressed affirmative action and made a special effort to increase minority representation in the federal government. This was accomplished by extensive federal recruitments at predominantly minority high schools and colleges. Federal agencies were also encouraged to provide minorities with better training opportunities especially through upward mobility programs (6:149).

Besides the emphasis on active minority recruitment, the value of President Kennedy's executive order was its broader enforcement powers, strong presidential backing, larger budget, more stringent requirements for reporting, and some success in convincing several corporations to improve employment opportunities (1:10).

With the establishment of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, the stage was set for a new era concerning minority equality; however, political pressure was continuing to mount and to complicate matters widespread demonstrations were occurring to force even more positive action by the executive and legislative branches of government.

In April 1963, violence erupted in Birmingham, Alabama which marked a historic turning point in the Nation's perception of civil rights and equal opportunity. After several weeks of demonstrations and violence, a truce was negotiated; however, in the next two months the Justice Department counted a nation-wide total of 758 racial demonstrations (4:393). In response to the national upheaval, President Kennedy asked Congress to enact a law that would do the following:

1. Ban discrimination by any privately owned enterprise that serves the public.
2. Provide a massive program to train Negroes and other unskilled people for higher paying jobs.
3. Grant the right to withhold federal aid from a project when local officials discriminate against Negroes.
4. Create a community relations service to work through local committees in attempts to encourage voluntary desegregation.
5. Expand the authority of the Civil Rights Commission (7:326).

Even though the President had picked up the momentum, the racial turmoil of the summer culminated in the massive but peaceful march on Washington in August 1963 (4:393). Three months later, the untimely assassination of President Kennedy caused a fear among many minority leaders that President Johnson would retreat from his predecessor's advanced position on civil rights and equal opportunity. It was a gratifying relief when the new President vowed to carry on the policies of Kennedy and pursued the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (4:395).

As Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act, the outlook of the equal opportunity movement altered significantly. The act declared that

it shall be the policy of the United States to insure equal employment opportunities for Federal employees without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin and the President shall utilize his existing authority to effectuate this policy (15:15869).

Under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established which superseded the earlier commission. This commission was empowered to handle individual complaints of discrimination in private companies engaging in interstate commerce with employment of 25 or more regular employees, in labor unions if they operated a hiring hall for covered employers, or if they had 25 or more members employed by a covered employer. In addition, employment agencies were covered by the act if they regularly undertook to supply employees for a covered employer. Notably absent from Title VII was any applicability for employees of federal, state, and local governments, private clubs, and educational and religious institutions (2:40). These exemptions appeared to be inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act, but a change would not occur for another eight years when a new public law would no longer exclude these institutions.

Unlike the executive orders discussed earlier, Title VII did not require affirmative action. It did permit the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to rectify, through any means necessary, complaints based on discriminatory practices. However, this would occur only after a finding of intentional discrimination (1:16). As can be imagined, the ability to prove intentional discrimination was a continual problem faced by the commission and had an adverse effect on the commission's charter to preclude inequities. Additionally, the commission began encountering Congressional budget restraints and was reorganized under the Civil Service Commission by President Johnson's Executive Order 11246.

Executive Order 11246 and the subsequent amendment, Executive Order 11375, not only reorganized the commission but established the Office of Federal Contract Compliance. These orders required affirmative action programs by all Federal contractors and subcontractors and required that firms with contracts over \$50,000 and 50 or more employees develop and implement written programs (21:13). To further preclude discrimination, the affirmative action was also extended to all of a contractor's other operations, not merely to government contracts. Here was the first serious implementation of an antidiscrimination policy, affirmative action, going beyond the previous passive nondiscrimination programs. Its main thrust was to remedy the effects of past discrimination as well as prevent ongoing present discrimination. Noncompliance would result in termination or suspension of government contracts (1:12).

The evolution of affirmative action, as we know it today, was completed with the passage of the Equal Employment Act of 1972. This act solidified the Civil Service Commission's authority and placed affirmative action on a statutory vis-a-vis executive order basis for the first time. It reaffirmed the long standing policy of nondiscrimination and empowered the commission to enforce its provisions through appropriate remedies, including reinstatement or hiring of employees with or without back pay. It also permitted the commission to issue rules, regulations, orders, and instructions as it deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure viable affirmative action programs (6:150). As mentioned before, this act rectified the fallacies of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in that federal



employees and agencies were to play an active role in affirmative actions. Key provisions of the law are as follows:

1. Federal agencies must submit equal employment opportunity affirmative action plans to the commission annually, and the commission may require modification of plans before final approval.
2. Each agency plan must provide for programs of training and education which will afford employees an opportunity to acquire skills and abilities needed to compete for advancement to positions of greater responsibility.
3. As part of its action plan review, the commission will review qualifications of all agency officials engaged in the equal employment opportunity program.
4. The commission will assess the adequacy of personnel and resources each agency is devoting to its equal employment opportunity activity.
5. Persons who allege discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin will have an opportunity to file a civil action in court if they are not satisfied with the final action taken on their complaints by an agency or by the commission's Board of Appeals and Review.
6. On a finding of discrimination, the commission may direct whatever remedies it deems appropriate (8:15).

At long last, true affirmative action was a reality. It was now time for federal agencies to develop their plan of attack on discrimination. The next chapter explains the Air Force's development and implementation of its Affirmative Actions Plan.

## Chapter Three

### AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

As a prelude in the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan, the Department of Defense Human Goals Program is cited as the basis for the plan. This is further emphasized by the following Human Goals Charter excerpt which is stated in the plan's introduction:

Our Nation was founded on the principle that the individual has infinite dignity and worth. The Department of Defense, which exists to keep the Nation secure and at peace must always be guided by this principle...The attainment of these goals requires that we strive...to attract to the Defense Service, people with ability, dedication, and capacity for growth; to provide opportunity for everyone, military and civilian, to rise to as high a level of responsibility as possible, dependent only upon individual talent and diligence; to make military and civilian service in the Department of Defense a model of equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, sex, creed, or national origin, and to hold those who do business with the Department to full compliance with the policy of equal employment opportunity; to help each Service member, in leaving the Service, to readjust to civilian life; and to contribute to the improvement of our society, including its disadvantaged members, by greater utilization of our human and physical resources while maintaining full effectiveness in the performance of our primary mission (14:1-1).

While the Department of Defense Human Goals Program, published in 1969, was a contributing factor in the creation of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan, it would be erroneous to assume the this program alone was the driving force in the plan's development. As mentioned in the previous chapters, there were several factors working in concert which formed the basis for the Air Force's plan. Executive orders, legislative actions (in particular the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972), Air Force racial violence in the 1960's and 1970's, the resultant Department of Defense and Air Force Task Forces/staff assistance visits, and the Human Goals Program--all played significant roles in the need for and eventual establishment of a plan which would

achieve and maintain harmonious relations within the highly integrated Air Force environment by ensuring the just treatment of all Air Force people while maintaining the

highest possible level of professionalism and combat readiness (14:1-2).

With this in mind, let's turn to the actual development of the plan.

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

During President Nixon's first administration, the Ash Council was formed to take a hard look at the problem of management effectiveness in the government. The council's recommendations resulted in new legislation to realign and revitalize the Executive Branch. In addition, President Nixon created the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in order to monitor management policies throughout the government. With a mandate from the President to improve government effectiveness, OMB launched a major new management initiative in the spring of 1973--a selective adaptation of the management-by-objectives (MBO) concept (9:23-25).

This new management approach was forwarded to the Department of Defense over the signature of the President. The memorandum highlighted the need to focus on results and not just actions in the design and operation of the department. It required the Secretary of Defense to identify program objectives and where an objective was part of a longer-term goal, the goal was also to be indicated (9:25). It was because of this Presidential direction that the Air Force began integrating MBO in its personnel plan.

As the Air Staff wrestled with the implementation of MBO, it also was attempting to develop the initial Affirmative Actions Plan. Although some semblance of MBO was used to establish equal opportunity policies and program actions, the compilation of data was confined to the Air Staff and the Air Force Military Personnel Center (later called Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center). It soon became evident that an effective program must involve not only higher headquarters but also commanders in the field (16:1). Consequently, the first plan for base-level use was published in October 1974.

The 1974 Affirmative Actions Plan was developed by Headquarters United States Air Force (HQ USAF). Using the Air Force Personnel Plan as a guideline, the new Affirmative Actions Plan contained 19 objectives applicable Air Force-wide and required that each objective be evaluated quarterly and results forwarded to HQ USAF (25:71). However, the plan was frequently misunderstood throughout the Air Force. Offices of primary responsibility were unsure of their role; unit commanders had not been adequately included in the management structure of the plan; there was no quantitative system for assuring status or progress; and the rating system was based on long range goals rather than progress in the near term. In addition, the use of the terms satisfactory, marginal, and unsatisfactory gave the plan an undesirable inspection image. As a result, base-level managers tended to concentrate on ratings rather than problem solving. It

became obvious to the Air Force leadership that the plan had to be revised.

In 1976, the Personnel Research Division developed a new methodology to quantify the objectives, and heavy emphasis was placed on statistical indicators. The ratings of marginal, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory were discontinued. The 1976 plan also clarified the Affirmative Actions Plan process and responsibilities and included an Affirmative Actions Plan Management Checklist (25:71). Although the 1976 plan relied heavily on statistics, the Air Force went to great lengths to explain the rationale behind the data computations. Each objective was designed to provide in-depth explanations on the objective status indicator, assessment tasks, assessment methodology, and management briefing requirements. To preclude any confusion, each objective contained a step-by-step guide on how to compute the required data on the Equal Opportunity Affirmative Actions Report, AF Form 1542 (see Appendix). The 1976 plan was a vast improvement from the previous plans and would remain as the foundation for the Air Force's affirmative actions even to this date. There were, however, two significant revisions—one in 1978 and another in 1982.

In February 1978, major changes were made in the content of the base-level plan. After a thorough review of the objectives at all levels of command, it was determined that some of the objectives served little value to field commanders in complying with the spirit and intent of equal opportunities for minorities. Consequently, 8 of the original 19 objectives were deleted and 1 objective was added. A total of 12 objectives would make up the new plan. In order to grasp the magnitude of the changes, this paper will later provide a synopsis of the revisions from 1976 to 1982; however, it is important to understand that of the eight objectives deleted in the base-level plan, the Air Staff and the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center continued to monitor five of these eight objectives at their level of command. Another major change in the 1978 plan was a revision in the reporting procedures. Instead of base-level reporting on a quarterly basis, the reporting requirements were changed to a semi-annual basis (25:74-75). This change was predicated on the fact that quarterly statistics were based on such limited numbers, and it was difficult to draw management conclusions on such a small representation. It should be noted here that another change in the base-level program did occur in 1979 when the race/ethnic data was broken out into five target groups: Black, Hispanic, Other Racial Minority, Women, and Caucasian Male. This change provided a better analysis of affirmative actions for Blacks and Other Racial Minorities and enabled a comparison between the minority target groups and the remainder of the Air Force population (i.e., Caucasian Male). Regarding this latter point, some field commanders contended that positive results in the affirmative action target groups were at the expense of the majority population. In order to avert any charge of "reverse discrimination," this new revision gave the Air Force the necessary data to monitor any impact. For the next four years, the plan remained relatively in tact, and progress was made in several of the remaining 12 objectives.

By 1982, continual improvement precipitated another review of the Affirmative Actions Plan objectives. Based on positive statistical data during several reporting cycles, three objectives were deleted. Reporting on another objective (On-the-Job Training) had been terminated in the early 1980's due to recommendations from the field; however this objective was being revised to track overtime and withdrawal training rates by the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. A total of eight objectives remained at the close of 1982, and the Air Staff was pleased with the progress made in the affirmative actions program. In order to gain a proper perspective of where we were in 1976 and where we are now, the following tables provide a synopsis of changes in the base-level objectives.

<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
P-001	Airman Commissioning	Deleted in 1978 *
P-002	On-Base Credit Unions	Deleted in 1978
E-101	Voluntary Education	
E-102	On-the-Job Training	
E-103	Professional Military Education	
E-104	Minority Airman Retraining Opportunities	
E-105	Human Relations Education	Deleted in 1978
U-201	Utilization of Assigned Personnel	Deleted in 1978 *
S-301	Community Service Programs	Deleted in 1978 **
S-302	Racial Incidents	Deleted in 1978 **
S-303	Discrimination Complaints	Deleted in 1978 **
S-304	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	
S-305	Adverse Actions	
S-306	Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing	
S-307	Medical Care	Deleted in 1978
S-308	Base Exchange Services	
S-309	Awards and Decorations	
S-310	Airman Promotions	
R-401	Involuntary Separation Actions	
* Monitoring continued at Air Staff		
** Monitoring continued at Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center		

Table 1. Base-Level Affirmative Actions Plan Objectives For 1976

<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
E-101	Voluntary Education	Deleted in 1982
E-102	On-the-Job Training	Deleted in 1980 *
E-103	Professional Military Education	
E-104	Minority Airman Retraining Opportunities	
S-304	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	Deleted in 1982
S-305	Adverse Actions	
S-306	Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing	
S-308	Base Exchange Services	Deleted in 1982
S-309	Awards and Decorations	
S-310	Airman Promotions	
S-311	Unfavorable Information Files	Added
R-401	Involuntary Separation Actions	
* Under revision by Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center		

Table 2. Base-Level Affirmative Actions Plan Objectives For 1978

<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
E-103	Professional Military Education	
E-104	Minority Airman Retraining Opportunities	
S-305	Adverse Actions	
S-306	Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing	
S-309	Awards and Decorations	
S-310	Airman Promotions	
S-311	Unfavorable Information Files	
R-401	Involuntary Separation Actions	

Table 3. Base-Level Affirmative Actions Plan Objectives For 1982

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The key to effective affirmative actions is the active involvement of commanders and supervisors (16:1-7). It is only at the grass-roots level that problems can be identified and resolved ensuring equal opportunity for all Air Force personnel. Even though each objective within the plan has a functional manager at base-level, these managers do not necessarily have first hand knowledge of whether a problem exists. In fact, commanders, who are normally far removed from the direct supervision of unit personnel, may be unaware of any unjust treatment occurring within the organization. It is an awareness of this premise that the Air Force decided to design the Affirmative Actions Plan around statistical information and mathematical computations as a management tool (16:1-7).

Quantification of AAP (Affirmative Actions Plan) objectives provides a numerical indicator of the status, and this 'indicator' represents the starting point in the AAP process. A deviation between the indicators of the target group and the desired standard is an indication that a problem may exist. It is important to note that the statistical indicator does not define what the problem is (16:1-7).

Just because a deviation from the standard occurs, this does not mean that discrimination is being practiced against a target group. Only after a thorough evaluation of the situation can a determination be made whether a problem exists and whether a management action is necessary. Accordingly, "the affirmative actions process is essentially a problem-solving technique" (17:19). This time consuming, though necessary, technique can be viewed as a five step process as shown in the following figure.

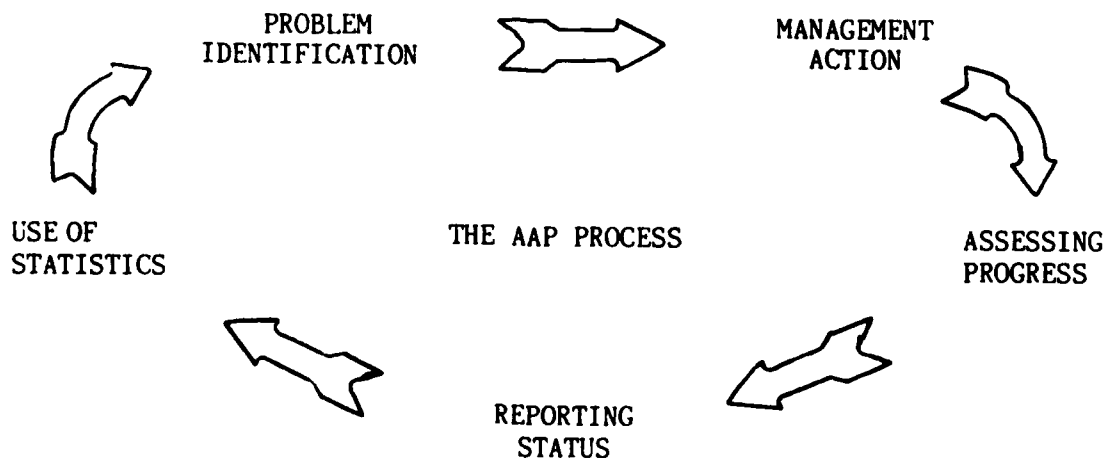


Figure 1. Affirmative Actions Plan (AAP) Process (17:19)

Although all five steps play a role in the process, at base-level four

steps, in particular, make up the crux of the evaluation process: use of statistics, problem identification, management action, and assessing progress. Since the first step, use of statistics, has previously been discussed in this chapter, let's briefly look at the three remaining steps.

When a deviation between the indicator and standard occurs, a potential problem may exist. In the problem identification step, it is important to determine the cause of the deviation. Determining this cause usually involves the use of an Affirmative Actions Plan Coordinating Committee or similar working group. This committee consists of unit commanders, equal opportunity staff members, Affirmative Actions Plan objective functional managers, and the senior enlisted advisor. Other ad hoc members may be present to provide advice or insight to the committee; for example, the base On-the-Job Training Manager may attend to discuss Career Development Course failures and the subsequent effect on Weighted Airman Promotion System testing. The purpose of this committee is to examine "all factors which could have a bearing on the situation, to include those areas where systemic discrimination (e.g., quality of education, attitudinal/motivational problems, etc.) could have an impact" (16:1-8). The keys to problem identification are isolating the cause(s) and determining whether personal or systemic discrimination exists. After the problem has been identified, the next step is the implementation of management action(s) to resolve the problem (16:1-8).

A management action must be an institutionalized "fix" on the problem. Again, the Affirmative Actions Plan Coordinating Committee plays a significant role in this step. This committee makes recommendations to the installation commander on the plan of attack. These recommendations must attempt to permanently resolve the problem. For example, it would be inappropriate to recommend that the commander just emphasize the importance of practicing equal opportunity at the weekly staff meeting. This type of action alone usually provides a temporary solution at best. "In implementing management actions, all parties must be concerned with optimizing the potential of human resources in support of the mission, and not merely making the numbers look good" (17:20). The final step in the base-level evaluation process primarily centers around "where we are" and "where we're going."

In the assessing progress phase, we once again return to the statistical data of each Affirmative Actions Plan objective. When there is no deviation or a positive trend between the indicator and the desired standard, then it is assumed that no problem exists. On the other hand, when a deviation does occur, it statistically signals the possibility of a problem. If the previous steps in the evaluation process have accomplished their objective, then the installation commander knows whether a management action is necessary regardless of the statistical deviation. It is important to realize that the statistical computations are guidelines--a management tool. Accordingly, if a commander believes no problem exists, then the objective is upgraded to acceptable. Conversely, if a problem does surface, the commander states what



management action(s) is/are being taken to resolve the situation. An integral part of the assessment step is also a reassessment of previous management actions when recurring problems are encountered. This normally necessitates a reevaluation by the Affirmative Actions Plan Coordinating Committee and the initiation of a new management action to permanently solve the problem. As a final point, another assessment tool is the reporting process with its accompanying statistics. This process comprises a closed feedback system (involving the bases, major commands, Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center, and the Air Staff) in which new, more current data is accumulated and the statistics which started the affirmative actions process are updated and used to reassess status. Remember, good problem-solving makes the Affirmative Actions Plan work!

## Chapter Four

### CONCLUSION

When the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan concept was developed, its main thrust was to provide local commanders with statistical indicators of possible discriminatory practices. It was assumed that elimination of discrimination would result in the attainment of all Affirmative Actions Plan objectives. Generally, Air Force personnel have acted decisively to eliminate vestiges of inequality; however, the Air Force cannot afford to relax its drive towards equal opportunity for all personnel, nor can it relax its efforts to promote better human relations and understanding.

At the present time, a new era is on the horizon for affirmative actions. In the final stages of coordination is a new base-level Affirmative Actions Plan to be implemented in the summer of 1984. This new plan is not a mere revision of the 1976 plan. It establishes some significant changes from the past. A modified methodology has been developed based on a rate of achievement concept; major commands have been given more control and responsibility; reporting requirements have been modified to allow for maximum use of automated products; Air Force and major command feedback reports have been enhanced; and several new objectives have been added, such as NCO Status Appointments and Vacations, Senior Airman Below-the-Zone Promotions, Officer Effectiveness Reports, Airman Proficiency Reports, and Upgrade Training. Hopefully, this new plan will revitalize our past efforts to ensure steady progress and to attain total equal opportunity, but success is dependent upon the efforts of managers, commanders, and supervisors at every echelon.

The purpose of this research paper was to provide a historical perspective of the Air Force's Affirmative Actions Plan. By reflecting back on the foundation and development of the plan, it is hoped that present and future commanders and supervisors can capitalize on the lessons learned to further improve equal opportunity in tomorrow's Air Force. The challenge is there but it takes a total team effort to meet that challenge. As Brigadier General Chris C. Mann stated during the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Convention in 1977,

We have developed a means to qualify and evaluate these actions (affirmative) to tell us where we are and what we need to do. The plan is not a 'numbers game' but a tool for managers that helps them to identify the location and

magnitude of the problem. At the heart of the plan is the emphasis on the need for commanders and supervisors at all levels to become involved (10:28).

## APPENDICES

## EXPLANATION OF QUANTIFICATION PROCESS

The key to the quantification process is the indicator. It is the difference between a standard and a reference point or comparison index (CI) as it is called on the AF Form 1542. Thus, the indicator is a value which identifies a deviation from a standard and is intended as a management tool for providing a quick look at the status of each objective. The indicator does not evaluate the entire objective but does provide meaningful insight to potential problem areas.

In the example, the first two columns provide the actual numbers eligible and selected for NCO Leadership School. Based on these values, the standard and CI are computed.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Standard} &= \frac{\text{Minority (or Women or SSO) eligible for NCO Leadership School (50)}}{\text{Total eligible for NCO Leadership School (250)}} = 20\% \\ \text{CI} &= \frac{\text{Minority (or Women or SSO) selected for NCO Leadership School (15)}}{\text{Total selected for NCO Leadership School (100)}} = 15\%\end{aligned}$$

The computations must be performed for each group--minority, female, and SSO in the same manner (in 1979 these groups were changed to Black, Hispanic, Women, Other Racial Minority, and Caucasian Male).

The standard identifies the proportion of the total eligibility pool who are in the target group. The Comparison Index identifies the proportion of those selected who are members of the target groups. A comparison is then made between the standard and the CI, and the resultant difference is the indicator (a value for the deviation from standard). Under normal situations, it is expected that there would be no significant difference between the selection and eligibility ratios for the target groups.

It is recognized that there will be random fluctuations from standard, and a cutoff score has been included to compensate for these deviations. This cutoff score is an Air Force-wide average of all indicators and deviations from standard and represents the maximum limit for the area to be considered acceptable (A). If an indicator falls outside this area, the objective requires attention (RA). Once a cutoff has been established, future cutoffs will not be allowed to regress from it. The cutoff will be computed by higher headquarters and dispatched to the field with instructions concerning the time period during which it will be applicable (14:1-8 - 1-10).

## Appendix A

<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS REPORT</b>					<b>OBJ NO.</b> <u>E-103</u>				
<b>INSTALLATION/MAJCOM</b> <u>Goode AFB</u>					<b>REPORT FOR QTR ENDING:</b> <u>31 Dec 76</u>				
<b>OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>					<b>USAF:</b> <u>DPPE</u>		<b>MAJCOM:</b> <u>DP</u>		<b>BASE:</b> <u>DPE</u>
<b>SUBJECT:</b> <u>Professional Military Education (PME)</u>									

NCO PME	STANDARD/INDEX COMPUTATIONS				STATUS ASSESSMENT			
	Elig	Sel	Std	CI	Ind	C/O	Eval	CA
<b>MIN</b>	50	15	20%	15%	-5	-3	RA	
<b>FEMALE</b>	25	10	10%	10%	0	-5	A	
<b>SSO</b>	10	2	4%	2%	-2	-1	RA	A
<b>TOTAL</b>	250	100						

**REMARKS:** (PROBLEMS, MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS, ETC.)

	STANDARD/INDEX COMPUTATIONS				STATUS ASSESSMENT			
			Std	CI	Ind	C/O	Eval	CA
<b>MIN</b>								
<b>FEMALE</b>								
<b>SSO</b>								
<b>TOTAL</b>								

**REMARKS:** (PROBLEMS, MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS, ETC.)

AF FORM 1542

Appendix B

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